

Lobster Limited-Entry Zones



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Department of Marine Resources

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Once someone completes the Lobster Apprenticeship Program, they must also see if they can get into the zone they want to fish. There are currently six zones with limited entry (Zones A, B, D, E, F, and G).

All zones now require that apprentices apprentice in the zone in which they intend to fish. Your sponsor(s) must have declared the same zone as the one you wish to enter and must have held a commercial lobster license for **at least** 5 years in order to sponsor you in that zone.

Who can get into a Limited-Entry Zone?

All lobstermen must declare a zone in which they *fish* the majority of their traps and will vote.

If someone wants to declare one of the limited-entry zones, they must either:

Hold a Class I, II or III lobster license in the previous year that indicated the limited-entry zone as his/her declared zone; or

1. Be eligible to obtain a Class I, II or III license and be under age 18; or
2. Be eligible to obtain a Class I, II or III lobster license and be over age 70; or
3. Be eligible to obtain a Class I, II or III lobster license under a medical or military appeal for that zone; or
4. Be authorized by the Commissioner as a "New Zone Entrant" off a waiting list.

How do I become authorized as a "new zone entrant"?

The Department has a waiting list for each limited-entry zone in chronological order according to their eligibility date. The list includes both transfers (i.e., fishermen from other zones who want to switch zones) and new zone entrants.

A person who does not currently hold a Class I, II or III license but has become eligible for a license:

- Will be put on the waiting list according to their eligibility date as they become eligible.
- Must fill out a Zone Declaration Form to indicate what zone that person wishes to declare as their declared zone within 30 days of notification of eligibility. The forms must be returned within 30 days of receipt in order to be placed on the waiting list according to his/her original eligibility date. A person who does not return the form within 30 days will be placed on the waiting list according to the date the form was received by the Department.
- Can purchase a commercial lobster license in an open zone or renew their apprentice and/or student license for the current year in any zone (if they are eligible).

A person who currently holds a Class I, II or III license and wants to transfer to a "limited-entry zone":

- Must fill out a Zone Declaration Form and request to be on a waiting list before December 15. The date the Commissioner receives the written request is the date that person will be put on the waiting list.

How is the number of new zone entrants calculated?

By February 1 of each year, the Department will calculate the number of licenses to be awarded to new entrants for each limited-entry zone for that calendar year. Up until 2009, the number of licenses was based on an exit ratio of the number of licenses not renewed in that zone in the previous calendar year. In 2008, the exit ratios for the limited-entry lobster zones were as follows:

- Zone A- 1 new zone entrant for every 3 licenses not renewed (1:3);
- Zone B- 1 new zone entrant for every 3 licenses not renewed (1:3);
- Zone D- 1 new zone entrant for every 5 license not renewed (1:5);
- Zone E- 1 new zone entrant for every 5 licenses not renewed (1:5);
- Zone F- 1 new zone entrant for every 5 licenses not renewed (1:5);
- Zone G- 1 new zone entrant for every 5 licenses not renewed (1:5).

Beginning in 2009, the exit ratio will be based on the number of trap tags retired by individuals exiting the fishery (no longer renewing their licenses). Each zone is required to go through a survey process to make a recommendation to the Commissioner for the exit ratio to be used in 2009. Rule-making to adopt these ratios will be conducted in the Fall of 2008.

How are new licenses awarded for a limited-entry zone?

Once the number of new zone entrants to be awarded a license for a limited-entry zone has been calculated for each limited-entry zone, a list of authorized new zone entrants is determined from the waiting list:

- a) Authorized new zone entrants will be informed in writing and mailed a license application form *by certified mail*.
- b) Authorized new zone entrants must submit their license application, correctly filled out for the same zone as their Zone Declaration Form, with correct fees and documentation to the Department. The Department must receive the application within 30 days of receipt of notice or the new zone entrant will lose their authorization to qualify for a limited-entry zone.
- c) If an authorized new zone entrant has not complied with above, the next person on the waiting list for the limited-entry zone, if any, will be sent a license application and have 30 days to comply in the same manner.

What if the person does not return the application within 30 days?

People who have not correctly completed their license application and returned it to the Department within the 30-day time frame allowed by law will lose their eligibility date but will remain eligible to get back on the waiting list. Their new eligibility date will be the date the Department receives a completed Zone Declaration Form.

- The Department will notify the person that they have missed their opportunity to purchase a license.
- To get back on the waiting list, the Department will need a completed Zone Declaration Form.

Who is eligible for a Commercial Lobster and Crab harvesting license?

A person who either:

1. Has held a Class I, II or III lobster license in the previous calendar year; or
2. Meets the requirements of the Apprentice Program (200 logged days and 1000 hours over a minimum of 24 months and provides the Department with documentation of having successfully completed a United States Coast Guard Approved Fishing Vessel Drill Conductor Training Course); or

Lobster License Appeals

A person may be granted a license under appeal if the person can document to the Commissioner that they meet the statutorily set criteria for a:

- Medical waiver; or
- Military waiver; or
- Reinstatement following a license suspension.

This brochure is a summary only.

Please refer specific questions to:
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